



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

National Center for
Import and Export
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Subject: Changes to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) Import Permitting Process for Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Exempted Food Products containing Meat and Poultry Ingredients.

To: Importers, Brokers, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Other Interested Parties

On January 30, 2009, the USDA, APHIS, VS at the request of the USDA, FSIS cancelled certain import permits for FSIS exempted food products containing poultry ingredients. At the same time, VS suspended the issuance of permit applications submitted to APHIS, VS, National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) for all FSIS exempted food products containing small amounts of meat and poultry ingredients.

As you are aware, USDA, APHIS regulates products of animal origin under statutory authority of the Animal Health Protection Act to ensure they do not pose a risk to U.S. animal health. USDA, FSIS regulates domestic and imported meat, poultry, and processed egg products under statutory authority of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act for public health. Together, APHIS and FSIS have implemented several policy changes to ensure that imported animal origin products do not pose a risk to either US animal health or public health. For those importers of FSIS exempted food products that contain small amounts of meat and poultry ingredients, FSIS and APHIS have revised how such permits will be issued.

The recent suspension of the permitting process has caused a backlog in processing applications and we regret the inconvenience. We are currently processing all permit applications that we receive.

Please be advised that all permit applications for FSIS exempted food products containing small amounts of meat and poultry ingredients submitted to APHIS after June 22, 2009, will be reviewed by FSIS prior to APHIS issuing permits. As part of the new process, after permit applications are submitted to APHIS, they must be reviewed and approved by FSIS to ensure the meat and/or poultry ingredients in such food products originate from an eligible source, i.e., prepared under FSIS inspection or in a foreign establishment certified by a foreign inspection system approved by FSIS. Importers will be required to provide documented evidence directly to FSIS to support the origin of the meat and/or poultry ingredient used in the food product(s) identified on the APHIS permit application. If this condition is not met, FSIS will advise APHIS that the imported food product is ineligible for importation into U.S. commerce, and a permit will not be issued.



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A list of countries eligible to export meat, poultry or processed egg products to the United States (i.e., amenable food products generally composed of more than a small amount of meat or, poultry, or processed egg product ingredients, or is represented as a meat food product or poultry food product) can be found on the FSIS web site at the following address:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Countries_Products_Eligible_for_Export.pdf

Questions for FSIS may be directed to FSIS at the following e-mail address: permits@fsis.usda.gov or at Toll Free number (888-287-7194).

Question for APHIS may be directed to Dr. Christopher Robinson at Christopher.c.robinson@aphis.usda.gov or at phone number (301) 734-3277.

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